

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
At 7pm at the Pavilion, Fownhope**

**Present:**

Cllrs Tim Jones (in the Chair), Kevin Braybrook, Sue Eames, Gareth Williams, Mike Simmons, Frank Hemming, Michael Short, Tony Kelk, Peter Neale and Will Morris following his arrival at 7.55pm.

**In attendance:**

5 members of the public; Clerk Helen Tinson.

**1. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Lavinia Smith and Claire Patel, and from Ward Cllr Graham Biggs. Cllr Will Morris had sent apologies for an expected late arrival.

**2. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Written Requests for Dispensation:**

**2.1.** To receive any declarations of interest: Cllr Mike Simmons declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5.6.2 (FRFA fees); Cllr Sue Eames declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 5.6.5 (reimbursement expenses Stuart Eames). The Declarations of Interest book was signed accordingly.

**2.2.** To consider any written requests for dispensations: there were none.

**3. Open Session:**

**3.1. Report from Ward Councillor:**

Ward Councillor Biggs was not present and there was no report.

**3.2. Representation from the Public:**

There were no representations from members of the public.

**4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Three members queried minute 6.2.2 as they did not agree that the response was as definitive as stated in the draft minutes. It was proposed to change minute 6.2.2 from:

‘The agent and business owner clarified that the User Terms and Conditions would restrict operating hours to 8am-10.30pm and that any external lighting would comply with the Parish Dark Skies Policy.’

To:

‘The agent was asked to clarify the opening hours. The answer was inconclusive. It was confirmed that any external lighting would comply with the Parish Dark Skies Policy.’

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the proposed change and subsequently approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

**5. Finance:**

**5.1. Finance Report:**

Members received the financial report, as appended (Appendix A). A question was raised concerning Earmarked Reserves

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the report. The Chairman approved and signed the Bank Reconciliation to 30.11.24.

**It was RESOLVED:** to append the Earmarked Reserves balance report to each finance report.

**5.2. To consider the Draft Budget for 2025/26 and set the Precept:**

Members considered the draft budget noting no further responses had been received from the public

consultation. The Clerk reported that the Salaries budget had been amended to account for the additional Employers NIC contributions introduced in the national budget. Members were asked to consider drawing on reserves or raising the precept by an additional £285 in order to balance the budget. A question was raised and answered concerning the budget to support churchyard maintenance grass cutting.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the draft budget for 2025/26, as appended (Appendix B).

**It was RESOLVED:** to raise the precept to balance the budget and set the precept for 2025/26 at £40,285.00.

**5.3. To ratify the purchase of new Sandbags:**

Members were asked to ratify the purchase of one pallet of sandbags (49 sandbags) at a cost of £164.15 including VAT. The sandbags had been ordered following extreme rainfall with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair in compliance with Financial Regulation 5.15.

**It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the expenditure of £164.15 including VAT. The Clerk was asked to promote the availability of the sandbags to parishioners.

**5.4. To consider new charges to the Lloyds Bank Account:**

Members were informed that Lloyds Bank are changing all Treasurer Accounts to a new Community Account and applying a monthly charge of £4.25, effective January 2025. The Clerk/RFO reported a cost comparison carried out against other suitable banking products and advised that the current banking arrangements continue to provide the best value for money.

**It was RESOLVED:** to accept the new charges and maintain the current banking arrangements.

**5.5. Payments:**

Members were asked to ratify payments made between meetings.

**It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the following payments:

**5.5.1.** Branson Street Furniture, Bench (approved 6/11/24), £510.00 plus £102.00 VAT

**5.6. Members considered invoices for payment:**

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve payment of the following invoices:

**5.6.1.** Nick Maddy Coaches, Ross Bus, November, £90.00

**5.6.2.** FRFA, Room Hire November, £22.00

**5.6.3.** Helen Tinson, Clerk Salary November, in accordance with contract

**5.6.4.** Helen Tinson, Reimburse Expenses, £55.85 inc £3.98 VAT

**5.6.5.** Stuart Eames, reimbursement expenses plants for Court Gardens £44.00

**5.6.6.** Cloud Next, .gov.uk domain renewal, £60.00 inc £10.00 VAT

**6. Risk Management:**

**6.1. To receive report from Clerk training:**

Members received a report from 'Insurance Risk and Responsibilities' training undertaken within the month. The training presentation had been shared with members and was taken as read. No questions were raised.

**6.2. To consider and review risk assessments:**

Members were informed that improvements were needed to the current Risk Assessments.

**It was RESOLVED:** that Cllr Peter Neale assist the Clerk reviewing, updating and improving compliance with Risk Assessments.

**It was RESOLVED:** to engage the support of the Parish Tree Warden, Parish Footpaths Officer, Parish Council Working Groups and volunteers to ensure compliance with completion of risk assessments.

**6.3. To consider revaluation of Pavilion and Tractor Shed:**

It was reported that a professional valuation of council owned buildings should be undertaken periodically to mitigate the risk of under insuring the cost of rebuilding.

**It was AGREED:** that the Clerk consult with the Fownhope Recreation Field Association (FRFA) in the first instance.

## **7. Community:**

### **7.1. To consider the new website:**

Members received a presentation of the new draft website (concept approved April 2024) combining the existing website with the Fownhope Calendar. As the two back-office systems were not compatible, the content from the existing website has been moved to the existing Fownhope Calendar WordPress site and re-designed into a new, fresher website. The Fownhope Calendar web hosting costs for the current year have already been paid and therefore no further costs are currently due.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the new design.

Members were asked to consider arrangements for business advertising, noting that local advertising on the existing site is out of date. It was proposed that the local business advertising pages are curated by the Fownhope Flag and linked to their paid advertisers. Advertisers currently pay for 11 issues of the Flag plus the Fownhope Directory, but as the Directory has now ceased it was proposed that the advertising package include 11 issues of the Flag plus digital advertising on the website.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the proposal that local business advertising is curated by the Fownhope Flag.

**It was RESOLVED:** to add a line of text to the page to clarify listings are curated by the Fownhope Flag and that no recommendation (by either Fownhope Flag or Parish Council) is implied by virtue of the listing.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Clerk contact all current advertisers and refer them to the Flag Team.

Members were informed that the site will be linked to the .gov.uk domain. Whilst it is understood to be a relatively straightforward process, members were asked to consider approving costs for technical support if it proves necessary. The intention is for the website to go live before the end of December.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve costs up to £200 for technical support if required.

Members wished to minute their thanks to Jon Parr for his voluntary work on the website.

Cllr Will Morris joined the meeting.

### **7.2. To consider the provision of warm spaces during winter months:**

Members considered providing a community warm space again this year but noted that attendees have to leave the warm space to return (in the cold) to a cold house. It was suggested that it might be more beneficial to signpost parishioners to trained professionals with access to full support.

**It was RESOLVED:** that Cllr Tony Kelk and the Clerk create a poster and promote appropriate and available support.

### **7.3. To consider the renovation of the Coronation Pump House:**

Members were asked to consider revisiting a previous intention to carry out remedial decorating works at the Coronation Pump House. It was noted that whilst the Clerk began to seek quotes at the time, the project stalled and was not completed.

**It was RESOLVED:** that Cllr Kevin Braybrook and the Clerk revisit previous correspondence and re-assess any works required to report to the next meeting.

## **8. Highways:**

### **8.1. Report:**

Members were informed that the application to the Local Drainage Fund has now been accepted in full and all work identified (Common Hill Lane/Capler Lane) can be progressed under the funded programme.

### **8.2. To consider response to recent flooding and HC's Natural Flood Management programme:**

Members discussed the flash flooding of the B4224 on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and likely causes. Members considered what could be done locally to reduce flooding. It was noted that Herefordshire Council's Natural Flood Management Programme focuses on natural processes and land management measures to both slow the flow of water and store the water within upland areas in order to reduce the risk of flooding to downstream communities. Members considered reaching out to the team.

**It was RESOLVED:** to reach out to the Herefordshire Council Natural Flood Management Team.

**It was RESOLVED:** to write to Ellie Chowns MP to raise awareness of local flooding issues and request national support for farmers to reduce run-off from fields.

**8.3. To receive report from the B4224 Strategy Group Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024:**

Members received a report following the B4224 multi-parish Strategy Group Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024. It was noted that Jonathan Lester, Leader of Herefordshire Council, supports the concept of county-wide multi-parish groups. Members considered the impact the proposed 1000-home development in Ross-on-Wye will have on the B4224.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Parish Council write to Jonathan Lester to ask that Herefordshire Council consider the impact on surrounding villages and to request money to help mitigate speed and road damage.

**8.4. To consider volunteers proposal to scrape kerb on the B4224:**

Members were asked to consider a proposal for the Fownhope Wheelbarrows to clear the gully on the B4224 corner with Woolhope Road (to the side of Tump Cottages). It was noted that a full risk assessment would be required, including traffic management that may require a Streetworks Licence.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Clerk investigate with Balfour Beatty/Herefordshire Council and liaise with the Chair and Vice Chair between meetings to progress as appropriate.

**8.5. To consider request for community feedback following the Hills Ford Rally in September:**

Members were informed that Cllr Barry Durkin, Cabinet Member for Roads and Regulatory Services, has requested a further community consultation following the Hills Ford Rally held in September. Members reported that vehicles did not appear to adhere to the speed limit as stipulated as they passed through the village.

**It was RESOLVED:** to promote the request for community feedback.

**9. Environment:**

**9.1. Report:**

**9.1.1.** The notes from the Environment Group meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November had been circulated and were taken as read.

**9.1.2.** The next meeting of the Environment Group has been scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.30pm at the Green Man.

**9.1.3.** A Wassail is being planned for the weekend of 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> January – more information to be circulated in due course.

**9.2. To consider hedge planting along B4224:**

Members considered the privet hedge planting along the B4224 in front of Cherry Hill Rise. It was noted that the hedge has been planted in accordance with the planning permission following a change from native mixed hedging imposed by the Planning Officer. The developer has no issue with native hedgerow whips being added to the privet but cannot assist as they do not wish to deviate from the approved planning specification. Members considered a proposal from a team of volunteers to purchase and plant whips at a cost of £400. A number of concerns were raised.

**It was RESOLVED:** to defer until next year and consider applying for free whips from the Woodland Trust.

**9.3. To adopt the Wye Valley National Landscape Position Statement on Dark Skies:**

Members considered adopting the Wye Valley National Landscape Position Statement on Dark Skies but noted the document is more than 50 pages long.

**It was RESOLVED:** to adopt the statement in principle and to ask the Environment Group to produce a summarised local policy.

**9.4. To consider quotations and next steps for Electric Vehicle Charging Points:**

Members were informed that quotations have been received to install EV chargers at the Recreation Field Car Park, The Green Man and Fownhope Medical Centre. The Marches LEP grant funding will cover the installation at the Recreation Field but a second installation is required to provide the matched funding

needed to access the grant. It was reported that the Medical Centre are keen to progress an installation pending final approval from the partners. The contractor has reported a 2–3-week lead time; it was noted that the charge points must be installed before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 to satisfy the conditions of the grant funding.

**It was RESOLVED:** to accept the quotation for the two charge points at the Recreation Field if the Medical Centre accept their quotation thereby providing the matched funding, and to engage the contractor for installation at both locations as soon as possible.

A query was raised concerning any financial impact from adding the two charge points to the Parish Council asset register and insurance policy.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Clerk would establish any increase in premium with the insurer and notify members via email.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve any increase in premium by email if applicable and ratify at the next meeting.

## **10. Footpaths:**

### **10.1. Report:**

Members received a report from the Parish Footpaths Officer noting:

**10.1.1.** No installations to report this month;

**10.1.2.** Herefordshire Council have now approved the grant funding for the installation of gates around Capler Farm and Hawkers Lane. The Parish Footpaths Officer is arranging to meet the contractor.

**10.1.3.** Walkers are Welcome are progressing well with improvements to the Wye Valley Walk and are now looking to improve accessibility on public rights of way leading to the Wye Valley Walk. Five additional gates have been approved in the parish. Walkers are Welcome will supply and install all gates and materials.

**10.1.4.** A resident of Cherry Hill Rise has reported problems crossing the B4224 with a pram to access the pavement because of the speed of traffic.

### **10.2. To consider improvements to PROW FWB8:**

Members were informed that residents of Scotch Firs and Cherry Hill Rise have been asked if they would be minded to make a financial donation towards the cost of materials required to improve the surface of FWB8, as requested at the last meeting. It was reported that residents would volunteer their time and labour to lay the path but felt that the materials should be funded by the precept.

**It was RESOLVED:** to defer further discussion to the next meeting.

## **11. Planning:**

### **11.1. To ratify planning responses submitted between meetings under delegated powers:**

**11.1.1. 242828: Manor Farmhouse, Fownhope, HR1 4PG.** Works to trees in a conservation area. It was noted that a response has been submitted to MAKE A COMMENT noting that the Planning Working Group accept the rationale for the proposed works and are content for it to go ahead.

**It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the response submitted.

### **11.2. To Consider Other Matters related to Planning**

#### **11.2.1. To note report of Planning Decisions taken by Herefordshire Council:**

Noted as appended (Appendix C)

#### **11.2.2. To receive update on drainage at Common Hill Lane development:**

It was noted that a report on drainage and the impact of the new development has been prepared but as the meeting was over-running it was proposed to defer discussion to the next meeting.

**It was RESOLVED:** to defer further discussion to the next meeting.

## **12. FRFA/Recreation Field:**

### **12.1. Report:**

There were no urgent matters to raise and as the meeting was over-running, it was proposed to defer discussion to the next meeting.

**13. Training:**

**13.1. To consider holding a Strategy Group Meeting:**

**It was RESOLVED:** to schedule a Parish Council Strategy Meeting for January. The Clerk was asked to circulate dates.

**13.2. To approve training for new councillors upon release of HALC Training Sessions:**

Members were asked to approve training between meetings as required by members, in anticipation of dates for the new year being released by HALC.

**IT WAS RESOLVED:** to approve any training required within the remaining budget.

**14. Consultations:**

Members noted the following consultations:

**14.1. Herefordshire Council Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland consultation, ends 8<sup>th</sup> December.**

**14.2. Herefordshire Council Budget 2025/26 consultation, ends 15<sup>th</sup> December.**

**15. Reports:**

**15.1. Clerk's report:**

The Clerk reported:

**15.1.1.** Office for National Statistics Business Register and Employment Survey: received and returned.

**15.1.2.** Barrier Post on Capler Lane: reported to HC and fixed but subsequently damaged again and re-reported for repair.

**15.1.3.** Playground questionnaire: no development since last month.

**15.1.4.** Hedge Work Biggs Lane: no further communication received since last month.

**15.1.5.** Infant swing seats: received and pending installation.

**16. Next Meeting:** Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 7pm at the Pavilion

**17. Agenda Items Raised for Next Meeting:**

**17.1.** To consider improvements to FWB8

**17.2.** To consider update re EV Charge Points

**17.3.** To consider report on drainage

**17.4.** To consider matters arising from Strategy Group meeting

**17.5.** To consider Dark Skies Policy

**17.6.** To consider the renovation of the Coronation Pump House

Meeting closed 9.09pm.

Signed .....  
**Chairman**

Dated .....

## Appendix A: Finance Report

**REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING:** 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**REPORT BY:** Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO

**AGENDA ITEM:** 5.1, Finance Report

### Bank Balances:

Lloyds: £7,609.57 (excludes payments to be approved 4.12.24)

Lloyds Reserve: £41,153.87

Hargreaves Lansdown: £21,599.92 (at 29.11.24)

Total funds held across all banks and investments at 29.11.24 = £70,363.36

### Payments Received:

- 1) FiPL Grant - £900.00 for the final gates installed on the Coronation Walk
- 2) Dormington & Mordiford Parish Council – £252.00 bus contribution

**Bank Reconciliation:** Has been completed to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and will be passed to the Chairman to check and sign at the end of the meeting.

**Bank Communications:** Hargreaves Lansdown: Autumn 2024 Investment Report

**PWLB Repayment:** The second loan repayment (£475.51) will be taken by DD on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

**PATA Payroll Service Annual Charges:** Will be £12.45 per month for the basic service, applicable from January 2025 (increased from £10.35 per month). £15 charged for pay increase arrears calculation.

**Parish Tax Bases:** HC have now issued the Parish Tax Bases for 2025/26 = 461.76 (441.07 in 2024/25). This means that an increased precept of £40,000 as proposed will increase the annual payment per Band D equivalent property from £86.15 to £86.62, which is an increase of £0.47 per (Band D or equivalent) property per year.

For info: Parish Tax Bases are calculated using a multiple of factors. HC have confirmed:

“Whilst new properties, once they are completed and ready for occupation can increase the tax base, this can be offset by an increase in those in the parish qualifying for council tax support where no income is then received. And of course the tax base is based upon the equivalent number of Band D properties, new premises may not all be Band D.”

## Appendix B: Approved Budget for 2025/26

Financial year	24/25	25/26
	Current budget to 31.3.25	Approved budget to 31.3.26
<b>INCOME</b>		
Annual Precept	£38,000	£40,285
Wayleave	£45	£45
Investment Income	£2,000	£2,150
Common Hill Management	£339	£339
DMGPC Ross Bus Contribution	£300	£300
Lloyds Interest (Reserve ac)	£225	£250
Participatory Budget from Reserves		£4,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£40,909</b>	<b>£47,369</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Clerks expenses inc travel	£400	£400
Admin expenses	£650	£600
Comms/Community Engagement	£500	£550
Insurance	£1,100	£950
Meeting Room Hire	£450	£400
Audit Costs	£500	£600
Website/Computer Costs	£500	£1,200
Training (Clerk, Councillors, Volunteers)	£650	£500
Subscriptions	£1,300	£1,600
Clerks Salary	£14,728	£15,775
Memorial Hall PWLB Repayment	£1,000	£900
Youth Support	£200	£200
Play Inspection Fee	£175	£175
Community Library	£550	£550
Ross/Ledbury Buses	£1,530	£1,530
Parish Lengthsman materials	£500	£500
Parish Lengthsman labour	£3,000	£3,000
Parish Footpaths PROW labour	£3,000	£3,000
Common Hill Management	£339	£339
Grass cutting	£800	£800
Parish Maintenance & Improvements	£2,000	£2,000
Tree survey and tree remedial work	£3,000	£3,000
New Projects	£2,000	£2,000
Community Groups & Habitat Grant	£500	£500
Participatory Budget (theme TBC)		£2,000



Participatory Budget (theme Youth Support)		£1,500
Participatory Budget (theme Habitat)		£500
Winter Gritting	£450	£350
Traffic Calming Measures	£0	£200
Election Provision	£0	£0
Churchyard Maintenance Grass Cutting	£1,000	£1,750
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>£40,822</b>	<b>£47,369</b>

### Appendix C: Planning Decisions Report

**REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING:** 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**REPORT BY:** Helen Tinson, Clerk

**AGENDA ITEM:** 10.3.1: To Note Report on Planning Decisions Made by Herefordshire Council

Planning Number	Address	Application	FPC Response	HC Decision
242143	44 Court Orchard Fownhope HR1 4NY	Works to Trees in a Conservation Area	Support	Works can Proceed
242395	Garden House Fownhope HR1 4PB	Works to Trees in a Conservation Area	Support	Works can Proceed
242381	Land at Common Hill, Hawker Lane Fownhope	Application for prior notification for proposed 11m high telecommunications monopole, 2 no. ground based equipment cabinets and ancillary developments thereto within a proposed 6 x 3m compound area adjacent to a proposed hardstanding access area.	Object	Prior approval not required – work permitted